SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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editorial

Mr Nixon again seen in his true colours

PRESIDENT Nixon has delivered his 12-point message on the State of the Union. In the profusion of words, there was however nothing new. A lot of verbiage concerning the "achievements" of his three years of office and an unveiled attempt to pass the buck to previous administrations and Congresses regarding present US internal and external troubles. He painstakingly wrested the truth on Viet Nam to hoodwink US and world opinion. He boasted of his troop pull-outs and ballyhooed future withdrawals on condition that his Saigon stooges could stand on their own feet. He highlighted the so-called ending of the ground-fighting role and reduced casualty toll. He again made high-sounding protestations of his will for peace and reiterated the promise of a negotiated settlement in exchange of the release of American POWs and of a 100% cut of US losses. But in the end, he betrayed his warlike and brutal nature with the threat that in case he could not achieve such a design he would wind up the war by means of Vietnamization allegedly to "defend the right to self-determination of the Vietnamese" and live up to "US commitment to the South Vietnamese" (please read the Thieu junta). In brief, the US President once more proffered a carrot and a stick, in order to translate into reality his dream of a "generation of peace" and to beef up US military strength to preserve US part in the international arena.

CLEARLY enough, with his message and January 20, 1972 speech, Mr Nixon has got off the start of the other hopefuls in the race to the White House. But his rhetoric could not conceal his embarrassment and confusion in front of the piling difficulties of the US in every field and his estrangement from US and world masses. His shifting of the blame onto others and shirking of his responsibility, for the current tension in South Viet Nam and other Indochinese countries and at home was a futile effort to divert public attention from what was at the back of his mind and to throw dust into the world peoples' eyes regarding his truculent and trigger-happy nature, his stubbornness and cunning.

In 1968, his pledge to bring about an early end of the war helped him win the presidency. But it is under his rule that not only has it been prolonged in South Viet Nam but also extended to the whole of Indochina. In the former land, he has kept it up with "Vietnamization," in Laos, he has been stepping up the "special war," in Cambodia, he has mounted an invasion followed up by further drives and operations, and in the DRVN, he has renewed air bombing and strafing and breaches of her sovereignty and security. His reverses on various battlefields have not however opened his eyes to the illusoriness of his dream of a military decision. He has been forced to withdraw his boys by the failure to carry the day with more than half a million GIs whose morale has been grievously sagging and by the unbearable price of the venture. He has had to go on with the run-down to diminish the war costs and casualties, and to ease the pressure of public opinion. But he has been far from giving up his aggressive intention, and shown obvious reluctance to bring home promptly, unconditionally and totally US and satellite soldiery. On January 13, 1972, he made no bones about his plan to keep a residual force in South Viet Nam. Meanwhile he has been strengthening the Saigon army, handing over to it bases, war materials and arms, introducing growing contingents of Thai mercenaries into Laos and Cambodia, transforming both client armies of his into storm troopers in the implementation of his "Vietnamization" in South Viet Nam and of the Nixon doctrine in Indochina. He has been using the "US commitment" and "respect for the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination," smokescreen to continue in office the fire-eating dictator Nguyen Van Thieu as a willing tool for the realization of his "Vietnamization" and neo-colonialism, for the suppression of the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese and of the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese. In the teeth of his own promise to negotiate a settlement he has been setting his face against the seven points of the RSVN PRG and staging provocations to undermine the Paris Conference.

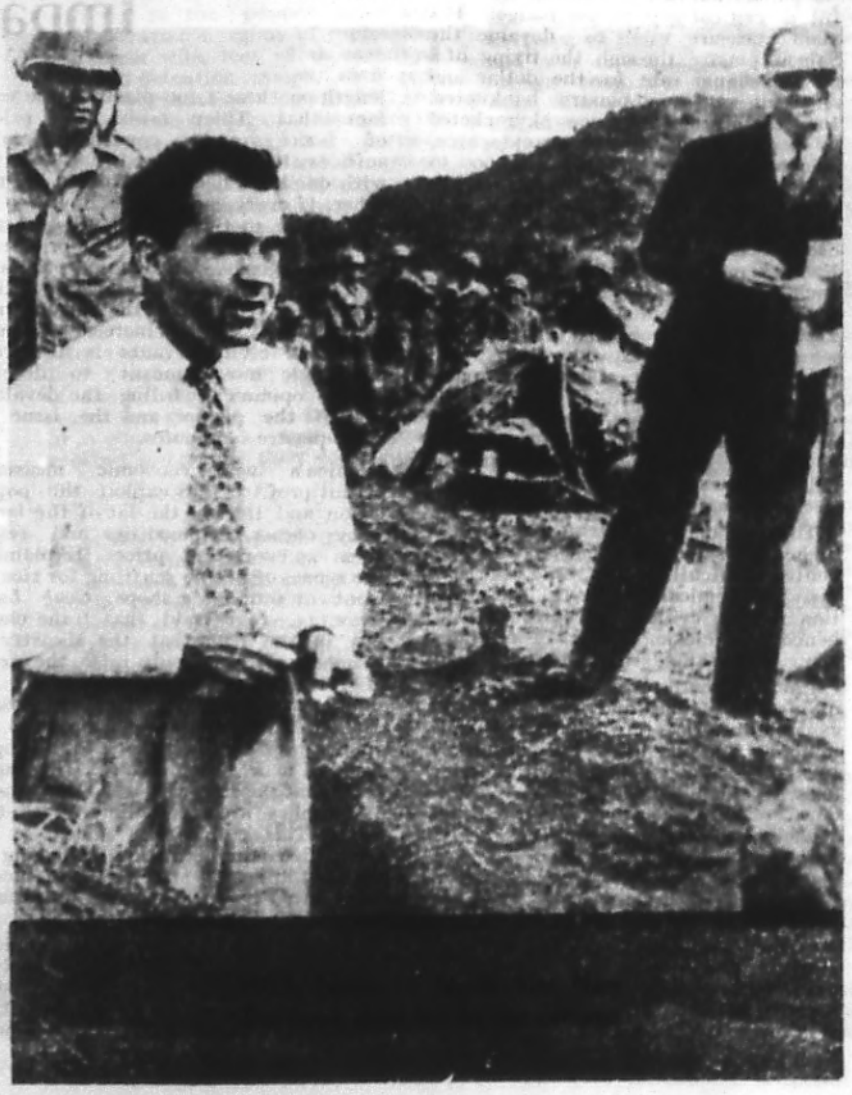
CERTAINLY no one will be taken in by the US Chief Executive's double-talk of ending US combat responsibility and US involvement, and of disengagement from the aggression. As the originator of this, the US Administration and particularly Nixon, its head, must answer for the consequences of the war. For all the US troop cutbacks, it still remains an American war, in the full acceptation of the phrase. "Vietnamization" only means replacement of the GIs by Saigon soldiers while the purpose of the aggression is unchanged. It does not at all lead to a halt of the conflict but instead drags out and intensifies the hostilities to an unprecedented fury. This strategy of Mr Nixon's and his namesake doctrine, amply illustrated in his message, have stamped him chieftain of all aggressive imperialists. The foreign policy, part of the document, is a tissue of diplomatic tricks highly representative of its deceitful author.

Hosts of facts have enlightened the Vietnamese as well as the other Indochinese about the aggressive will of US imperialism, throughout their confrontation with it over nearly a quarter of a century. The Americans and the world peoples have also seen the true colours of Mr Nixon. Even with 10 messages, scores of televised speeches and no end of foreign tours, no change would be brought to the nature of imperialism.

NO amount of obstinacy, cruelty and craftiness will ward off Mr Nixon's failure. More crimes will only compound his setbacks. Bombs and bullets, sophisticated engines of death will not turn the tide in his favour and snatch victory out of defeat. There is little doubt that the Saigon army cannot discharge its role as shock troops in the implementation of "Vietnamization" and the Nixon doctrine in South Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. The severe beatings it has received at the hands of the three countries' peoples and armed forces in 1971 in Highway 9-South Laos, North-East Cambodia, Tri-Thien, Tay Nguyen, the Mekong delta, etc. have accelerated its decline. Leaning on such an emasculated army is like leaning on a broken reed. Prolongation of the war will only lengthen the US casualty list, put off the return of the GIs and the POWs, aggravate US political, social, economic and financial troubles. In thwarting the Indochinese peoples' aspirations for peace and independence, the US and world peoples' longing for peace and justice, Mr Nixon will surely worsen his isolation and invite more humiliating setbacks.

THE sense of purpose of the Vietnamese will not be impaired by any brutal force. The unity of the three Indochinese peoples, the unity of the South Vietnamese will not be shaken by any power. Their ultimate victory is a foregone conclusion, so is Mr Nixon's final defeat. We will carry on our resistance against US aggression and for national salvation to a bitter end.

SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle



STEPPED-UP US CHEMICAL WARFARE

PUBLIC opinion throughout the world has been strongly critical of Nixon's intensified use of toxic substances and other chemical weapons against civilians and their sources of livelihood in South Viet Nam. To deceive public opinion and cover up his crimes, Nixon has recently ordered "suspension" of the use of such chemicals there.

But according to reports by a US mission just back from a fact-finding tour in Indochina, the stocks of US orange product now existing in South Viet Nam are enough to spray 200,000 hectares of land in doses required by the army, and in fact it has been widely used there.

Scientists from several countries have revealed that the chemical poisons used by the US in South Viet Nam in the past years have had a lasting dangerous effect on the vegetation, life and nature. The 21.9 x 10^6 kilograms of 2, 4, 5-T contained in the US orange product dumped on South Viet Nam since 1962 are a medical hazard (intoxication and generation of monstrosities) and have many a time exposed the US imperialists' crimes.

However, the US has persisted in stocking and wantonly using noxious chemicals in South Viet Nam, and it is under the Nixon administration that such poisonous substances have been most extensively employed there. In the 1970-1971 fiscal year, Nixon spent 8 million dollars for the purpose, and intended to further spray over 1,300,000 gallons of green and white products on South Viet Nam.

According to the December 28, 1971 communiqué of the Committee for Denunciation of US Imperialists' and Their Henchmen's War Crimes in South Viet Nam, in the past year several localities of the 20 provinces of South Viet Nam were repeatedly attacked. In 1971 alone, more than 475,000 hectares of ricefields, gardens and forests were devastated by chemical poisons, 173,000 people intoxicated, many incapacitated for life and some 100 lethally.

On March 15, 1971, US aircraft and guns of different types lobbed gas-bombs and gas-shells all day long on Hong Thuy, Thien Thuy, An Thuy... villages (Huong Hoa district, Thua Thien province), killing 40 people, 300 buffaloes and oxen and a large number of other domestic animals, and ruining hundreds of hectares of ricefields, orchards and forests.

In a week ending April 27, 1971, US noxious chemicals were over again dropped on several areas of Hoa Vang district, ravaging all rice paddies and vegetation, and affecting 1,270 people, many of them mortally.

The US-Saigon poison spraying on March 28, 1971 on My Hiep village (Phu My district, Binh Dinh province) played havoc in an area of over 4 square kilometres, hitting 212 people, killing many people and animals. In March, April and May 1971, An Xuan village (Tuy An district, Phu Yen province) was for 10 consecutive days exposed to US-Saigon chemicals. Ninh Loc and Ninh Tho villages (Ninh Hoa district, Khanh Hoa province) and some areas in Kontum province last September and October had 3,800 draught animals killed and over 90 per cent of their population seriously affected.

In early September and by the end of 1971, poison sprays were intensified in Nam Bo (South Viet Nam proper). In Long Thanh, Nhan Trach and Xuyen Moc districts, over 200 hectares of fields and orchards were laid waste and 80 per cent of the local people poisoned, a number of them succumbed.

Besides noxious chemicals, the US-Saigon also released gas-bombs on Chau Thanh Bac district (My Tho capital city) and Tri Ton district (An Giang province), causing 1,600 people to vomit blood and 420 women to miscarry.

In many provincial and district capitals and rural areas, US chemical poisons inflicted eye-trouble on 2,000 people in only a month. In August 1971 alone, over 30,000 people in West Nam Bo had their eyes hit by toxic substances.

In addition, the US and its quislings have been resorting to other atrocities. For instance, on February 7, 1971, they poisoned food in Nhi Long and Hiep Phuoc (Tra Vinh province); on April 10, 1971, they dropped gas-bombs on Khanh Hung B village (Ca Mau province); and in a raid on July 21, 1971 in An Quy village (Ben Tre province), they doused the people's shelters with poisons gas, killing many civilians.

The massive use of various types of chemical weapons against the South Vietnamese people in 1971 showed that despite their successive setbacks on the South Viet Nam and Indochina battlefields and the initial failure of "Vietnamization," the US imperialists continued to commit increasing horrors in defiance of strong universal condemnation. Such offences have given the lie to Nixon's claim on December 26, 1970 that the US had imposed a halt on the use of chemical "defoliants."

in the cities

• On Dec. 31 afternoon, Saigon students and pupils gathered in large numbers in a place 100 metres away from the Central Cathedral—where Nguyen Van Thieu was "praying for peace" — to demonstrate against the US-Saigon war escalation. Banners and Nixon's effigies were displayed. One of the posters read: "Let's behead Nixon the warmonger." Thousands of leaflets demanding US troops withdrawal and opposing Nixon's prolonging the Viet Nam war of aggression were distributed around the Central Cathedral.

• Immediately after the news of the arrest by the Saigon police of Huynh Tan Mam — a student leader — an emergency meeting of the Execution Committee of the Saigon Students' General Association was called and enquiries were made at various jails for Huynh Tan Mam's whereabouts, but to no avail. Plans were then mapped out at a joint meeting of the Executive Committee and representatives of the Saigon University for an action for the release of Huynh Tan Mam and 61 other students and pupils illegally arrested. In addition, a statement was issued by the Students' General Association to denounce Nixon's war prolongation policy, and call on the American people to back the anti-US struggle of the Vietnamese people for peace and justice.

• On Dec. 23 and 24, on orders from the Saigon administration, field police confiscated all the food supplied to the "Orphan's Village" of Long Thanh, thereby starving thousands of its inmates — victims of the US-Saigon war of aggression — for two days. In the course of 1971, the Long Thanh Orphan's Village was many times subjected to acts of terror by Thieu's agents who laid a siege to it, and even schemed to raze it to the ground, in retaliation for the resolute protests of 3,000 orphans of the village for better living conditions.

• A recent order was issued by Nguyen Van Thieu to put in jail Ngo Cong Duc, a former "MP" and editor of the opposition paper *Tin Sang* on charge of contravening a clause of Thieu's press regulations according to which "editors cannot be absent from editorial offices more than two months."

"Autumn Economic Measures" Impact on Townsfolk

A fortnight after installation, on Nov. 15, 1971, Nguyen Van Thieu enforced "new economic and financial measures" to further squeeze the population in the occupied zone and fill a critical gap in his budget. His main measure was to devalue the Saigon piastre through the fixing of a new exchange rate for the dollar and an issue of 1,000-piastre banknotes. Immediately market prices skyrocketed up to 40% and necessities became scarce. The cost of rice went up from 5,600 to 6,800 then to 11,000 piastres per 100kg, that of a tin of milk from 50 to 100. The prices of Western medicines increased from 2 to 3 times, those of Eastern medicines doubled. Eventually such necessities as foodstuffs, salt, sugar and eggs went up from 100 to 212%, newsprint 200%. The result, wrote *Tin Som* of Nov. 19, 1971, was that "the rich set about buying gold and silver and cars... to preserve the value of the piastre. Wage-earners and petty sellers live from hand to mouth, in anxiety, anguish and expectation... All that has given a free hand to profiteers to manipulate the market."

The devaluation of the piastre and higher taxes have engendered unprecedented difficulties for trade, particularly in chemical fertilizers. The situation is also critical for cotton fabric, hence the closing down of retailers' shops and a standstill in tailors' trade.

Industrial enterprises vegetate because of mounting taxes and to the lack, or exorbitant prices, of imported raw materials and machines. The goods they turn out cannot compete with foreign ones, so many of them had to slow down or stop their production with all the adverse consequences for the workers employed.

With a view to placating opinion and lessening opposition, Thieu demagogically accorded government officials and armymen an additional grant of 1,200 piastres allegedly to help them meet price hikes. About this the Saigon daily *Tin Sang* (Nov. 21, 1971) had this to say: "Needless to comment at length on these 1,200 piastres, the very fact that Thieu raised the prices of rice and condensed milk suffices to show that what he gives with one hand he takes back with the other. If every month one buys 100 kg of rice and 10 tins of milk, these 1,200 piastres cannot even meet the price rise on these goods, let alone on others." The president of the General Association of the War Wounded of the Saigon army stated that "the pay increase of armymen and civil servants is a merely demagogic move meant to deceive public opinion regarding the devaluation of the piastre and the issue of 1,000-piastre banknotes."

Thieu's new economic measures permit profiteers to exploit the population and live on the fat of the land. They corner commodities and resell them at exorbitant prices. Explaining the scenes of people scuffling for rice in front of retailers' shops, *Cong Luan* (Nov. 23, 1971) said that "the cause lies in the fact that the Ministry of Economy does not only raise the price of rice but also cancels supply to retailers' shops in favour of wholesale dealers. Such a situation provides an opportunity for profiteers to monopolize and make fat profits." The paper also charged the General Department of Supplies with complicity with the latter. This collusion is winked at by the Thieu administration. Mugging is rampant in Saigon streets, the offenders being often no one else than uniformed soldiers.

Confronted with a vociferous opinion, Thieu set up a "National Committee for Price Stabilization." In two successive communiqués the said committee threatened with capital punishment anyone complaining about "daylight robbery." It also ordered all traders to inventory their stocks and threatened to withdraw the licences and close down the concerns of all those who happened to violate its regulations, even to punish them with imprisonment.

Dan Chu Moi asked this question: "Is the change of prices of 1,400 commodities, particularly necessities, mostly along an upward trend as a result of the devaluation of the South Vietnamese currency, a great revolution?"

"If 'revolution' means nothing but this, but the devaluation of the piastre in terms of the dollar, hence the soaring prices and the loss of 45% of everyone's spending money and wages, then, alas, there will be thousands of such 'revolutions' with resulting complaints and opposition from the majority of the population."

At present, while denouncing the Saigon administration's predatory "new economic measures," wide segments of South Viet Nam urban population are pushing up their struggle against war budget and high taxation, and for an end to war, for the replacement of the militarist and warlike Thieu clique since "they do not want that with Thieu's 'Autumn revolution',

— millions of children turn pale for want of milk;

— tens of thousands of people's lives are jeopardized because they can't afford medicines;

— millions of persons are but bags of bone for lack of food and clothing;

— and, most deplorably, this land becomes a foreigners' sweat workshop" (*Tin Sang*, Dec. 2, 1971).

Thieu Schemes to Turn Saigon Press into a Tool for "Vietnamization"

UNDER "Vietnamization," Nguyen Van Thieu has been doing his best to turn the press in the South Viet Nam cities into a propaganda instrument in his service.

But most of the journalists in the enemy-held areas are men of conscience, attached to truth and reason, share the people's sufferings, despise and abhor the enemy disregard for the people's life and fundamental rights. Therefore, they willingly transformed their own papers into mouthpieces of the masses in the areas still under US-Thieu control.

Failing to compel the press to publish news and articles in line with their reactionary and traitorous outlook and prevent them from reflecting the people's eagerness to bare their corrupt society dependent on the US, the Thieu administration has stopped at no brutality to persecute the Saigon press. Instead of censorship, it has resorted to confiscation and fines. In an attempt to silence its and the opposition parties' high feeling against Thieu's one-horse race, the Saigon authorities seized nearly 250 paper issues in September and October 1971. 141 of them were banned in October alone. In December 1971, while public opinion in Saigon was greatly stirred by US renewed crimes against the people in North Viet Nam, the adoption of the 1972 budget by the Saigon National Assembly and the enforcement of the "autumn economic measures"..., 3 private-owned news agencies were closed down, 159 papers were seized and 11 others fined from 30,000 to 300,000 piastres (Saigon currency).

Beginning 1972, 9 dailies and weeklies were similarly victimized right on the New Year's Day. In the first 10 days of January, both *Dien Tin* (Express) and *Tin Sang* (Morning News) had all their 10 issues seized. As Western news agencies have remarked, Saigon has set a world record in this respect.

Confiscation of newspapers is really an extremely vicious manoeuvre which makes a sheer mockery of the freedom of the press in Saigon. By such a move newsmen have been hit both politically and economically. Though not censored nor banned from publication, the penalized papers cannot however reach their readers. All the news and articles have been "confined" while the editors-in-chiefs have to buy newsprint and pay correspondents and workers, and the pressmen continue to write, but all their efforts cannot serve the mass struggle's requirement, and ultimately the publishers have to close down their editorial offices, sack reporters and workers due to deficit. Together with increasing confiscations, the Saigon quisling authorities have also imposed heavy fines and raised the newsprint cost two-fold to force the press circle to give up their honest way of earning their living and serve as their hack writers.

Despite all such frantic actions the South Viet Nam pressmen are aware that unless their country is independent and free, the press cannot be really free. So long as the US-Thieu rule remains, "Vietnamization" will be carried on, and repression and terror, starvation and poverty continue to exist. Only by standing at the people's side, regarding their pens as swords and themselves as fighters and braving all cruelties, resolutely opposing the US imperialists and Thieu, fascist dictatorship and "Vietnamization" and agitating for independence, freedom for the country and welfare for the people can the progressive press survive and enjoy genuine freedom.

Taking the people's aspiration as their aim, closely uniting themselves with people of other strata, fearing no tyranny and violence, and not flinching before the enemy's threats and demagogic attempts, they have been winning repeated successes in their struggle against the US-Thieu atrocious and machiavellian schemes and acts.

AI THI

Nixon Continues the War

IN his confusion and passiveness before the stern condemnation by public opinion in the United States and the world of his State of the Union message, US president Nixon on the evening of January 25 blared out his "eight-point peace plan" allegedly to "end the war in Viet Nam." He ballyhooed about his readiness to negotiate for the "withdrawal of all US troops from South Viet Nam within six month," on the condition of "an agreement," the "exchange of prisoners of war," the "organization of a new presidential election in South Viet Nam within six months after an agreement is reached" and that "Thieu would resign a month before the election," etc.

Nixon drummed up his "good will and peace" to deceive public opinion in the US and the world and build up support for his presidential candidacy. Nixon's eight-point plan has nothing new, instead it is only a repetition of his shopworn allegation and tricks and a reiteration of his bellicose stand and stubborn, aggressive and extremely perfidious nature.

NIXON promised to withdraw all US troops from South Viet Nam within six months, but he did not set a definite deadline, instead conditioned it on an "agreement." Nixon used ambiguous terms to cover up his scheme of perpetuating the US military occupation of South Viet Nam and set conditions for the repatriation of US troops. It is the US that is sabotaging systematically the Paris Conference on Viet Nam, so how can Nixon come to "an agreement" that meets the aspirations and interests of the Vietnamese and American peoples? Nixon tried his hardest to make believe that "to withdraw all US troops" is "to end all US involvement" in South Viet Nam. However, the so-called "ending of US involvement" is but a screen to cover up his scheme of maintaining the bellicose Nguyen Van Thieu ruling group to continue the prolongation of the war and to materialize US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam. Nixon again raised the POW problem as if he had been greatly concerned about the fate of the captured American armymen. But in an interview granted to the periodical *Reader Digest* on January 26, Nixon arrogantly stated that he would maintain the rest of US troops in South Viet Nam and reserve the right to continue bombing North Viet Nam if the US could not achieve a "ceasefire" in the whole of Indochina and the repatriation of all American prisoners of war. Nixon has still nurtured the illusion of success through his "Vietnamization of the war" policy which is going bankrupt. Even Nixon brought home all the US troops, but as long as he still clings to the traitor Nguyen Van Thieu and the US war of aggression continues to rage, the Viet Nam problem cannot be settled, peace cannot be restored in South Viet Nam and the rest of Indochina, and the list of the captured American armymen will continue to lengthen.

As long as Nixon maintains Thieu as an instrument to pursue the war and repress the South Vietnamese people, as long as the US continue to massively introduce Thai mercemaries into Laos and Cambodia to carry out aggression, the "ceasefire in the whole of Indochina" is only a trick aimed at forcing the South Vietnamese people and other Indochinese peoples to lay down their arms, stop their fight, give up their sacred right of self-defence and recognize the puppet regime of US henchmen. If an effective and genuine ceasefire ensuring lasting peace is to be achieved, it must be the three-point ceasefire proposal put forth by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam on December 10, 1970. Ceasefire can be achieved in South Viet Nam only after the US has withdrawn all its troops and a government of broad national concord has been set up.

The so-called "new presidential election in South Viet Nam" proposed by Nixon "is but an election at the gunpoint and bayonets of the puppet administration and army and the remaining US troops in South Viet Nam. His proposal that Thieu resigned a month before the election and the Chairman of the Saigon "Senate," an agent of Thieu, organize the election is nothing but a repetition of the October 3, 1971 farce in the hope of compelling the South Vietnamese people to recognize the traitorous regime rigged up by the US and repudiate the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the legal and legitimate representative of the South Vietnamese people.

Living in the puppet army and administration's regime of repression, and terror with tens of thousands of jails and detention camps, with repeated "pacification" operations and savage retaliation against members of "opposition" groups and parties, how can those who stand for peace and neutrality have free elections and how can the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination be ensured?

The seven-point proposal of the PRG clearly points out that the South Vietnamese people's right of self-determination can be ensured only after the US withdraws all its troops from South Viet Nam and the regime of the US lackeys is eliminated. A really free election will be organized by a government of broad national concord comprising three components.

NIXON'S eight-point plan is an extremely perfidious manoeuvre aimed at soothing pupblic opinion in the United States with the withdrawal of US troops in exchange for the release of "POWs," but still maintaining the bellicose Thieu clique as a tool to realize the "Vietnamization of the war" policy and US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam.

But the perfidious allegations uttered in despair by the bloodthirsty hawk proved that he is in a position of embarrassment, passiveness and unprecedented isolation. Even after the announcement of Nixon's plan, many Senators and peace organizations in the United States laid bare Nixon's tricky moves and psychological manoeuvre aimed at winning public opinion at home and abroad. Jerry Gordon of the National Peace Action Coalition said: "Americans do not want an eight-point peace plan but a one-point plan for the US to get out of Indochina now, lock and barrel." Senator Edward Kennedy said: "The point is not to explain the failures of the past. The point is to end the war." The Nixon's stand of stubborn colonialist aggression has ever driven the United States to failures and piling difficulties. The only way for the US to end its costly war and get out in honour from the Viet Nam quagmire has been charted by the seven-point peace initiative of the RSVN PRG. The two fundamental points of this initiative which are closely connected are: the US government must end its war of aggression, its "Vietnamization of the war" policy, speedily and unconditionally withdraw all troops, advisors, military personnel, weapons and war means of the US and the foreign countries in the US camp from South Viet Nam, dismantle all US military bases, halt all activities of the US air and naval forces in both North and South Viet Nam. The US government must respect the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, stop all interference in the South Vietnamese people's internal affairs and stop keeping in power the dictatorial and bellicose Nguyen Van Thieu as a tool to continue the "Vietnamization" policy in order to pave the way for the formation of a new administration in Saigon standing for peace, independence and neutrality and democracy, ready to seriously talk with the RSVN PRG to set up a government of broad national concord. This government of national concord will be the authentic and competent body to organize really free and democratic general elections in South Viet Nam issue in conformity with the fundamental national right and the right of self-determination of the South Vietnamese people and the aspirations for peace and justice of the people in the world.

OUR people earnestly desire peace but it must be peace in independence and freedom. Nixon's obdurate bellicose stand and insolent threats further consolidate our people's determination to persist in and step up their struggle, to stand shoulder to shoulder with their brotherly Cambodian and Lao peoples to frustrate the "Vietnamization" policy and the "Nixon doctrine" so as to bring the Indochinese peoples's resistance to US aggression, for national salvation, to complete victory.

A NEW ADVANCE OF GUERILLA WARFARE IN SOUTH VIET NAM

ONE of the gains of strategic significance of the South Viet Nam armed forces and people in 1971 was the fresh progress in both quantity and quality of guerilla warfare. This was all the more significant as the Saigon troops were trounced in their incursions beyond the border, battered throughout South Viet Nam and seriously weakened and the GIs steadily withdraw. It was best seen in its confrontation with US-Saigon "pacification".

The outcome of the grim contention in the past year showed that despite their murderous means and wicked schemes the enemy was unable to stamp out revolutionary bases in the countryside, let alone guerilla warfare, deeprooted among the masses. Instead, the former were consolidated and as a result, the latter was strengthened. Wrote the *Washington Post* Saigon correspondent on July 19, 1971: As in the past Viet Cong political influence predominates in the localities. American intelligence points to a more powerful infrastructure than last year. Guerilla warfare in South Viet Nam did not "fade away" as the US-Saigon expected but surged ahead in all the three strategic areas: mountains, plains and cities.

The new offensive posture of guerilla warfare developed right in the "pacification" key areas, in the so-called "pacified" zones, and even in the cities of South Viet Nam.

In the Mekong delta, guerilla warfare continued to expand despite the aggressors' fierce onslaughts. In Tra Vinh province, with rudimentary weapons the guerillas fought, 3,528 engagements, wiping out 8,700 adverse troops, 60 per cent of enemy total casualties. The Soc Trang guerilla (West Nam Bo) put out of action 5,095 enemy men and disbanded 4,970 "people's defence" members, and regained control over 131 "strategic hamlets". In the tenacious resistance against sweeps in U Minh area, the guerillas and militiamen wiped out over 8,000 Saigon soldiers, razed and put to flight many garrisons. According to Western papers and news agencies, "in the delta, at least 500 hamlets are under Communist control. The situation worsens beyond expectation", said many Americans, "everywhere pacification marks time." Vinh Binh (Tra Vinh is among the provinces with a poor record of pacification" (*Express* of May 16, *New York Times* of July 21, and *AP* of August 3, 1971). In the plains of Central Trung Bo, although the US-Saigon command had set up many posts, hurled GIs, Saigon troops and Pak Jung Hi mercenaries into raids on the area time and again, and resorted to most atrocious pacification methods, guerilla warfare firmly maintained the offensive and revolutionary bases were reinforced. During an offensive in Binh Dinh, the guerillas and regional troops kicked the adversary out of eight villages and scores of hamlets, drove them from 85 garrisons in two districts along Highway One, and widened the liberated zone. Remarked the Western press, pacification has not brought the populous provinces in the Centre under Saigon control (*International Herald Tribune*, September 9, 1971).

Such townships, towns and cities of South Viet Nam as Saigon, Da Nang, Dalat, Hue, Qui Nhon rang with armed self-defence members' feats. Saigon urban guerillas disposed of police thugs right in the streets in broad daylight. With popular support, these of Da Nang clashed with the enemy in 650 engagements, inflicted 3,950 casualties chiefly on US-Saigon policemen and officers, destroyed 345 military vehicles and scores of posts.

Remarkably, the use of primitive arms became widespread. Of the 10,000 adverse soldiers put out of combat by the Nam Bo and South Trung Bo guerillas and regional forces within three months, 40 per cent fell into traps, mines and spikepits. With small weapons and home-made mines the U Minh patriots downed or wrecked 110 aircraft in eight months.

It is beyond any doubt that US-Saigon "pacification" in 1971 met with setbacks and receded everywhere. The achievements of the previous years had been rated as "flimsy" and "insecure" by US and Western opinion. Far from being curbed, guerilla warfare in South Viet Nam advanced by leaps and bounds. Revolutionary bases were not "smashed" as planned. The US Embassy in Saigon has admitted that the opponents' political organization has not been hit anywhere in South Viet Nam (*New York Times*, July 21, 1971) and American officials even said that Viet-Cong underground activities are stepped up into a new phase (*US News and World Report*, August 23, 1971).

Guerilla warfare greatly helped the South Viet Nam population worst "pacification". While stimulating their uprisings, it dealt powerful blows at "pacification" forces. The US-Saigon tactics of encroachment by setting up posts from which to launch "pacification" raids was foiled. These garrisons were either erased or harassed by the guerillas. Already under fire before they began erecting their posts, the enemy suffered still fiercer assaults when these had been built, whether they ventured out of them or dug in there.

Throughout 1971, the Saigon army received devastating punches wherever they delivered battle. Of the more than 16,000 men put out of action in the long and big operation in U Minh area, over half went to the credit the guerillas and regional forces. The atrocious sweeps in Central Trung Bo and Eastern Nam Bo met with the same fate, for the guerillas' combat efficiency had steadily increased. They could now easily get the better of whole adverse squads or platoons. In 1971 guerilla warfare contributed to foiling the US-Saigon "pacification" plan in its highest rung. The Saigon main force continued declining, the enemy's occupation force was stunned by its heavy setbacks, the mounting popular struggle in the cities sprang deadly assaults on the nerve organs of the quisling administration. There is every indication that guerilla warfare will become more powerful and successful.

T.H.

Home-made mines versus US tanks. Heroic guerilla unit in Quang Tri

An interesting capture

IN vain did the PLAF squad search for the whole night. In vain did they call on the remnants to surrender: no one came. Tu, the squad leader, decided: the bulk of the enemy regiment having been decimated by the PLAF attack, the remnants had fled to the neighbouring jungle. They could not have gone far but probably because of the psywar poison of the Americans they dared not come out to surrender.

Dawn broke. The search party split into three groups each going in one direction. Tu took the lead of one group. He took a short cut by crossing a brook when he spotted a puppet soldier crawling toward the stream, apparently to appease his thirst. Overtaken by the PLAF he turned pale and shook in all his limbs. He said beseechingly:

"Don't kill me, I'm wounded."

One of the liberation combatants bandaged his wounds and gave him to drink in his canteen. Obviously astounded by this gesture, the Saigon soldier stammered:

"Heavens! Yet they told us the Vietcong would kill everyone that falls into their hands."

He made a pause then went on:

"Yesterday afternoon, although we had put up conventional signs to show where we were, the American unleashed many bombs, destroying most of our wounded. Fortunately, I escaped this carnage."

"Where is your gun?"

"I hid it in a bush over there," he said, pointing ahead with his finger. "I've also put there my wristwatch and more than one thousand piastres which is the February pay I've just received. If you don't mind, I want to... offer you all that".

One of the PLAF men went and recovered the gun, the watch, the money and other belongings of the Saigon soldier, and handed them back to him:

"Take it, it belongs to you. Arrived at the camp you will hand it over to the responsible men who will keep it for you. Later when you are set free, they will return it to you."

The soldier now burst into sobbings: "What a shame! They told us that the PLAF would kill all the prisoners to rob them of their money, wrist-watches, fountainpens and what not. I was so scared I decided to hide everything of my personal belongings before fleeing." Suddenly, pointing ahead into the jungle, he said:

"There still are some fifteen of us there. I'll take you there".

The captive and the search party then proceeded to a nearby bush. The Saigon soldier stopped before a cave hidden behind the bush and called out:

"Messrs squad commander and all of you fellows, come out and surrender, there's nothing to fear!"

Moments later four soldiers came out, then six others and finally four more.

The oldest of them, a skinny middle aged man with a sun-tanned complexion, was the last to come out. He stepped toward the PLAF men, held out his hands and said:

"I am the sergeant commander of the squad. Tie me first!"

One of the men standing beside him said in his turn:

"Hiding behind the bush we have seen and heard everything. Had we known all this before we shouldn't have waited till now to surrender!"

N. C

Saigon Students' Poetry

The flowing white tunic

This morning in the firing line,
A schoolgirl in her green years
Raised high her fist to claim the right to live,
Toned up the blue of peace with her blood.
Her locks flowing on her slender shoulders,
Her snowy dress draped her graceful back,
She faced the foe,
Stared down violence,
And trod on a carpet of white flowers.
The banner of militancy she held in one hand,
The standard of victory she brandished in the other,
Waving forward her mates irresistibly.
They all thundered out
An earth-rocking war cry:
US go home!
Which rumbled through the land
And roused all Saigon into action.
Her lily-like tunic fluttered
In the pungent smoke,
In the Unity boulevard.
Hot with the heat of combat,
In our homeland
Racked by the throes of an upheaval,
Her alb-like robe glowed in the academic vault.
Rockets screeched in, in withering waves,
And she fell in the fury of the battle.
Lying in the arms of her mates,
She rapped out in a clear voice,
"Forward, comrades!
Check their advance
And trample on their hydra heads!"

V.H.L.

in our liberated zones

NFL AND PRG ACTIVITIES

o Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho has recently sent congratulations to Femi Al Youssefi on his appointment as Chairman of the National Assembly of the Syrian Arab Republic.

o Upon learning of the death of Chen-yi, Vice-Premier of the State Council and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and President Huynh Tan Phat have sent a joint message of condolence to Premier Chou En-lai.

o The Defence Minister of the RSVN PRG has addressed greetings to the Supreme Command of the Lao People's Liberation Army for its 23rd founding anniversary.

o Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho sent on January 20, 1972 a message of sympathy to Denmark's Queen Margarete II on the passing away of King Frederick IX.

o The South Viet Nam Liberation Youth Union has recently sent to North Viet Nam two cadres, Phan Van Truoc and Nguyen Dinh, to joint the Ho Chi Minh Labour Youth Union in setting up a joint North-South Viet Nam youth team to take part in the building of a model primary school in Cuba.

MEDICAL ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN CENTRAL TRUNG BO

o The medical branch in Central Trung Bo (Central Viet Nam proper) has recently held a conference to review its work in 1971.

A report made known that the village and hamlet medical service had produced over 5 million tablets of all kinds, more than 100,000 doses of Eastern tonics or drugs made from local pharmaceutical plants, and over 3 tons of jelly made from animals' bones and herbs. In the last 9 months of 1971, laboratories and workshops in the whole region turned out 10 million tablets, nearly 2 million litres of vaccine, 25,000 litres of drugs, 203,000 phials of all kinds and over 100,000 doses of Eastern medicines, and 40,000 tablets of tonics.

Also in 1971, 1,424 nurses and 67 laboratory attendants and thousands of midwives were trained, and 141 more physicians and middle pharmacists graduated from the local Medical School.

Up to now, the medical service in Central Trung Bo has brought from 50 to 80 per cent of the hospital beds down to the hamlets and villages to give more widespread medical treatment. Over 90 per cent of the hospitals and medical stations have their own drug-processing rooms.

The mass prophylactic movement in the region has been unceasingly developed and strengthened. As the village and hamlet medical net has been active in both the delta and mountain region, and the health preservation and treatment establishments well organized, all epidemics in the liberated areas have been checked in time, as well as those spreading from the US-Saigon-held area.

o In the same period, the civilian medical service in My Tho has given treatment to thousands of people, and preventive inoculations to over 60,000 others. It has also built 2 province hospitals, 16 district dispensaries and hundreds of village medical stations and hamlet medical teams. Each province has its pharmacy and 6 districts have their own pharmaceutical team. These establishments have produced over 20 kinds of medicines, trained hundreds of more nurses and dozens of laboratory attendants. With the help of various mass organizations, and the revolutionary administration, committees for mothers' and children's welfare from the provincial level downwards have been set up.

o Up to now, the civilian medical service in Ca Mau has completed the establishment of a medical net from the province to the villages and hamlets, and built many dispensaries. The surgical teams and mobile medical groups have been active and recorded good results. Eastern and Western drug - processing rooms and a dental room were set up in the province and run by experienced medical workers.

In the last months of 1971, the Ca Mau medical establishments gave attention to over 3,000 patients from US-Saigon bombs and shells, and preventive vaccination and acupuncture to nearly 40,000 people. They also trained over 200 more medical workers, turned out scores of kinds of drugs and thousands of Eastern medicine doses.

o In Phu Yen province, the mass education movement has been forging ahead. Many villages of the mountain district of Tuy An have 100 per cent of their inhabitants attending mass or complementary education courses.

o In 1971, the Ben Tre province dance and song ensembles gave performances deep in the enemy-held areas for over 20,000 spectators.

The province culture and art association has published a collection of poems and two pamplets of stories on PLAF heroes which have received widespread welcome.

In the liberated zone: a drug laboratory

Road ready for vehicles to the Front

THE DRVN IN BRIEF

+ On January 14, 1972, Le Duan, First Secretary of the CC of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, visited the light industry exhibition. He recommended that branch to turn out greater and greater quantities of good-quality commodities for the ever growing needs of the people.

+ Visiting the display of examination papers and graduation works of the students of the Industrial Crafts School, Premier Pham Van Dong commended the achievements recorded by the students, teachers and cadres of the school and advised them to see to the training of artisans skilled in one trade and proficient in many others, in order to help improve the people's living conditions.

+ At a conference reviewing the professional and scientific work done in 1971, the Ophthalmologic Institute reported many achievements regarding its prophylatic and therapeutic work, particularly against trachoma, and worked out its 1972 plan.

+ Many engineering works of the Hanoi Industrial Service have successfully developed a number of new machines, such as an automatic harvester operating on all kinds of ricefields and riceplants and with the efficiency of 20 reapers. With the addition of a number of accessories, it can do such work as ploughing, harrowing, weeding and pumping,

— a washing machine Model G800-25, for use in hospitals, rest-homes, kindergartens.

— a silicate brick moulder.

+ At the beginning of the year, hundreds of workers of the Machine Tool Workshop No 1 obtained a labour productivity of from 115 to 320 per cent.

The workers and cadres of the works are resolved to fulfil the first-quarter plan 5 days ahead of schedule, and to reduce production cost by 20 per cent compared with the control figures.

+ In one month at Z factory, an hero-unit of the VNPA Logistic Department, 1,370 workers surpassed their own quota, and introduced 79 innovations, recording a yield boost of from 25 to 250 per cent.

The enterprise has designed and begun to mass-produce a number of high-precision articles.

For Our Beloved Fatherland

o On January 5, 1972, the "Viet Nam Free Forces Central Committee," a political organization set up by Vietnamese residents in France released a communiqué exposing Nixon's spurious stock-in-trade in his TV interview of January 2.

The communiqué pointed to the bellicosity and obduracy of the US President who not only refused to settle the Viet Nam problem on the basis of the PRG seven points but also cynically prolonged the Viet Nam war, unleashed his bombers against North Viet Nam and heaped up untold crimes against our people. "With his war mania," the communiqué continued, "Nixon has courted another setback by not only failing to bring all US troops home but also by lengthening the list of captured US militarymen. Clearly he has arrogantly defied the censure of the world's peoples."

o According to the Bulletin No 1 of the Committee for the Defence of the Vietnamese Students' Interests in Belgium," the Saigon administration has been trying to crack down on all the students eager to get information about the Viet Nam war. A case in point is its refusal for remittance of funds to Nguyen Thanh Van, a second-year student at the Liege Medical College (Belgium) suspected of having contacts with the "Communists." Van and many of his fellow-countrymen in Belgium strongly criticized the arbitary measure as an act of victimization of the Saigon adminiistration.

• From October 13 to 16, 1971, the International Conference of Students was held in Washington under the sponsorship of the National Association of American Students and attended by a delegation of five Vietnamese students. The conference declared support for the PRG seven points and demanded that the US government stop backing the Nguyen Van Thieu's dictatorial regime.

The Vietnamese students and many American students then called at the Saigon Embassy in Washington and urged the release of Huynh Tan Mam and other political prisoners in South Viet Nam.

o From September 1 to 6, 1971 the Patriotic Vietnamese Residents's Association in Canada organized with the People's Peace Treaty in New York a Viet Nam-US Campus at Sainte Anne de la Rochelle, near the US frontier, attended by about 200 people (not including the Americans not allowed to cross the border). At this rally, the Vietnamese and Americans exchanged views on the situation in Viet Nam and in the US and on Vietnamese culture.

The subjects of discussion were: Vietnamese culture, the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, the PRG seven-point peace proposal, the anti-war movement in the US...

Present on the American side were members of the People's Peace Treaty, the Viet Vets Against the War, the National Alliance for Peace and Justice, the US Committee of Assistance to the National Front for Liberation of South Viet Nam, the ADF Documentary Film Studios, the Newsreel Studios, the Radio of Free People, the Black Panther Party, the papers *Liberation News Service*, the *Guardian*.

Before parting, both sides worked out a program of closer relations and issued a statement "supporting the struggle for peace and independence of the Vietnamese people, backing the PRG seven points, affirming that the urgent task of the Americans is to check the US imperialist's Viet Nam policy and cultivating solidarity between Americans and Vietnamese."

o On November 19, 20 and 21, 1971, the Association of Patriotic Vietnamese Resideuts in Canada staged a teach-in on Viet Nam with anti-war Americans in New Hampshire, during which the Vietnamese gave a lecture on Viet Nam's history, the South Viet Nam NFL, the present situation in South Viet Nam urban centres. The teach-in was enlivened by a film show, performances of songs extolling fighting Viet Nam, especially the songs calling on the Saigon students to act.

The progressive Americans also gave an account of their activities.

Winding up the gathering, they decided to set up a Committee of Solidarity with Viet Nam in order to keep the American people posted on the situation in Viet Nam and to organize roving exhibitions on Viet Nam.

In October 1971, the Ithacs Broadcasting Station in New York carried an interview with the Association of Patriotic Vietnamese Residents in Canada reviewing the movement of South Vietnamese townsfolk against the US-Thieu clique. Some Vietnamese interviewed pointed to the close relations between the anti-war drives in Viet Nam and in the US. Others called on the American people to step up their action for the Nixon administration's acceptance of the seven points of the RSVN PRG.

US-THIEU DEPORTATION PLAN PUSHED UP

THE US-Saigon agents, including secret policemen and troops disguised as civilians, supported by small groups of soldiers, aircraft and artillery, rounded up people in the coastal region of Quang Tri - Thua Thien and moved them to the southernmost areas of South Viet Nam.

In only 5 days ending January 19, 1972, some 500 people were apprehended and then concentrated in a place near Thua Thien Prison. The US-Thieu clique compelled them to write applications for evacuation, but as the victims put up a stiff opposition, they were brutally manhandled and submitted to savage tortures. 5 of them were beaten to death on the spot west of Hue Prison, including 2 with broken skulls.

To push up their deportation scheme, besides house searches and raids, a large puppet armed force, riding in armoured vehicles, ravaged ricefields and orchards and even resorted to massive bombings, shellings and chemical sprayings, thus aggravating the famine caused by last October typhoon and flood.

Many Saigon "MPs" who had voiced protests were arrested on charge of violating the "constitution".

People in several localities of Quang Nam - Thua Thien also shared the same predicament. According to initial reports, 700 people were herded into Phuoc Lam concentration camp to be eventually sent southward.

RECUPERATION OF THE WHOLE BOLOVENS PLATEAU

THE Command of the Southern Laos Military Area on January 21 issued a communiqué on the fresh victories won by the patriotic forces and people in the southern part of Laos, according to *KPL*.

The communiqué said: "During more than a month of fighting (between December 6, 1971 and January 11, 1972) the patriotic forces and people in Saravane and Bolovens provinces recorded brilliant victories and recovered the whole Bolovens Plateau, completely foiling the scheme of the US imperialists and their quislings to nibble at the liberated zone of Southern Laos.

In the 1971 rainy season, along with their nibbling operations in the Plain of Jars-Muong Suoi liberated zone, the Vientiane puppets, acting upon US orders, mustered a big force of about 30 Vientiane puppet battalions seconded by 5 Thai battalions under direct US command and with the cover of US air power, to launch a nibbling operation against the liberated zone in Saravane and Bolovens provinces.

They encroached step by step on provincial capitals and Saravane, Paksong, Thateng and Ban Phon district towns, committed innumerable crimes, herded people into concentration camps, drafted young men into the army, killed civilians, destroyed villages and hamlets, and sowed discord and enmity among different nationalities.

Implementing the Order of the LPLA Supreme Command and co-ordinating with the patriotic forces and people in the Plain of Jars and Xieng Khoang and other battlefronts across the country, the army and people in Saravane and Bolovens from December 6, 1971 started their attacks on the enemy's defence line along Highway 23 from Saravane to Pakse provincial capitals, and won very great victories:

They successively recovered Saravane provincial capital on December 6, 1971, Thateng township on December 10, 1971, Paksong township on December 27, 1971, and Ban Nhik area on January 11, 1972.

In this wave of attacks, the LPLA killed or injured **1,800** enemy troops and captured more than **100** others, heavily trouncing the Vientiane puppet 42nd Mobile Brigade (GM) and **2** Thai mercenary battalions, and seized or destroyed more than **500** weapons of various types including 50 cannons or heavy mortars and a large quantity of other military equipment.

The Lao PLAF attack!

On the Occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Angolese People (Feb. 4)

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

IN Angola, the struggle against the Portuguese colonialists' rule continues. For eleven years, the national liberation flag has been fluttering on this West African land.

Aided and abetted by Western imperialist powers, first and foremost the United States, then West Germany, Great Britain, etc., the Portuguese colonialists have been obstinately opposing the Angolese people's movement for national emancipation. On their side have stood the South African and Rhodesian racist. Like a horde of hungry jackals, they have been preying upon this country rich in coffee, oil, diamonds, iron ores and uranium.

US imperialism — this number one murderer of Vietnamese and Indochinese — comes first as supplier of all war means, from quick-firing guns to napalm bombs, from jets to toxic chemicals, for the Portuguese colonialists to kill *en masse* innocent Angolese and devastate their villages and crops.

Assisted by the US imperialists, the Portuguese rulers have increased their build-up by 100,000 men. But, as the London-based *West Africa* pointed out, there is no sign that this huge army, though supported by fighter-bombers and swarms of helicopters, will bring the Portuguese nearer to victory. On the contrary, the paper said, their military situation is worse than three years ago. It is crystal clear that Portuguese colonialism, and world imperialism behind it, has met with the resolute resistance of a nation that had gone through 400 years of ruthless exploitation and that has now stood up in the tidal wave of national liberation sweeping the whole world.

That the Angolese people's drive is kept up in face of all the war efforts made by the Portuguese aggressors with the assistance of other imperialist countries, constitutes in itself a great achievement. Under the leadership of the ULPA headed by President Agostinho Neto, guerilla warfare has spread all over Angola. The enemy have had to dig in in some bases and cities. Patriotic forces have been active in all the five war zones, and more especially in places where the enemy's economic enterprises and industries are concentrated: oil in Luanda, diamond in the North-East, coffee plantations in the West...

The free area — 500,000 square kilometres or one-third of the national territory — is more and more consolidated. A new state power has emerged and supplanted the old colonial regime. New industrial crops have been grown, and new schools and medical stations built. This is only a modest beginning. But for the Angolese people the liberated zone represents their Angola of tomorrow, of freedom and happiness, under the care of the MPLA.

The Angolese people's just cause enjoys the sympathy and support of all African peoples and all forces of progress the world over. In recent years, numerous international and regional gatherings have condemned, in declarations and resolutions, the Portuguese colonialists' policy of plunder and terror, and the US imperialists' and some other NATO countries' collusion with them. The world peoples have been called upon to lend more active support to the Angolese, and the importance of the latter's contribution to the common struggle of the Asian, African and world peoples for the total liquidation of imperialism and colonialism, for independence, peace and social progress has been stressed.

Standing in the van of the fight against US aggression, the South Vietnamese people completely identify themselves with the just cause of the brother people of Angola. They strongly condemn the savage repression by the Portuguese colonialists and the US-headed world imperialists and colonialists who have been actively helping the Portuguese fight against the peoples of Angola and of Africa as well. They are firmly confident that the Angolese will draw enough strength from their determination to fight and their unity and secure ultimate victory.

LAO PLA STRATEGIC GAINS IN SAM THONG - LONG CHENG

THE Lao peoplé and their People's Liberation Army have won a new victory of strategic significance: after over 10 days of sustained fighting wholeheartedly assisted by the local people, on January 12, 1972, the Lao patriotic forces drove out all adverse troops from Sam Thong and Long Cheng, and recaptured an important region formerly held by the PLA and neutralist forces.

Sam Thong - Long Cheng was an important military compound of the US aggressors and their hirelings in Laos. Since the signing of the Geneva Agreements, the US had spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the building of this position.

Also in Long Cheng was located the commanding post of Vang Pao and the command of the 2nd Military Zone and the refuge of US-supported "special forces" chiefs in Laos. The base was also a US-Lao joint "operational centre," from which spy-commandos had been sent for subversive activities against the liberated areas.

In the past years, under the CIA direct command, units of Vang Pao "special forces" and Thai mercenary troops had conducted several large-scale "mop-ups" against the liberated zone. To cope with the patriotic forces' offensives, the adversary had been trying to reinforce Sam Thong - Long Cheng, especially following their recent bitter in the Plain of Jars - Muong Suoi area.

A new defence perimeter was set up. More reinforcements were sent to the base. US air force, including B.52 bombers, were active round the clock. The commander-in-chief of the Vientiane forces pledged to "defend the base at all costs" (*UPI*, January 9). General Abrams, commander of the US expeditionary corps in South Viet Nam, hurried to Bangkok to discuss with reactionary Thai Premier Thanom Kittikachorn measures to rescue the Vientiane army, for the loss of Long Cheng would entail serious strategic and political consequences for Thailand as well as for Laos (*AFP*, January 8).

But all the efforts of the Yankees and their stooges were labour lost. Their adversary continued to mete out due punishment.

The Plain of Jars — Long Cheng rout was both a strategic military and political disaster.

First of all, it was a deadly blow at the Vang Pao bandit troops mostly used by the Pentagon in its "special war" in Laos. Badly mauled, and forced to abandon their sanctuary, these troops are heading for their total disintegration.

In Long Cheng, the adversary had at their disposal several kinds of troops, such as Vang Pao bandits, Thai mercenaries, Lao rightist forces brought from the South..., were entrenched in a rugged terrain defended by strong fortifications and equipped with US mondern war means. They nevertheless took a harsh punishment, which testified to their further weakening and a new change in the balance of forces on the Lao battlefield.

By recapturing Sam Thong - Long Cheng, the patriotic forces in Xieng Khoang not only recovered an important zone and a nerve sector which will help them consolidate the Plain of Jars strategic region. They have also wiped out one of the US largest military bases on the Lao territory and destroyed an important part of the US-Vientiane forces. This will provide fresh facilities for the Lao people to further expand their forces and achieve bigger successes.

On the other hand, the US aggressors and their quislings have been driven into a more critical state of passivity and the Nixon doctrine further frustrated. The victory has greatly contributed to strengthening the strategic offensive posture of the 3 Indochinese peoples in the coming period.

The South Vietnamese people and their liberation armed forces proudly and jubilantly draw a great inspiration from their Lao brothers' successes. They wish them bigger advances to help further translate into reality the spirit of the Joint Statement of the Indochinese Peoples' Summit Conference.

THE DOLLAR DEVALUED

WHATEVER Nixon and his associates may say, the devaluation of the dollar in December last year constituted a major setback for the United States on the economic and financial as well as on the political planes. That is the conclusion one can draw from an analysis, though preliminary, of the causes and sequels of the devaluation of the capitalist world's strongest currency.

Ten years ago President Kennedy could boast without being contradicted that the dollar was as good as gold. At present, not only can't Nixon make such a claim, but he has also proved unable to keep his preposterous promise on August 15, 1971 to bury the devaluation bogy. The latter has however appeared and this very fact suffices to show everyone the low ebb of the international credit, and not merely from the financial point of view, of the US dollar.

In all fairness one should concede that Nixon had postponed until the last minute a decision which ought to have been taken long before, since, for quite a time, all the factors making up the near absolute predominance of the dollar no longer existed: a substantial gold reserve, an amount of almost inexhaustible commodities, and a favourable commercial balance and balance of payments, in a word the factors stemming from an economy holding overwhelming superiority in the capitalist system after World War II.

Since then many things have happened.

On the one hand, owing to the emergence and ceaseless growth of the world socialist system and the disintegration of the colonial system, the market of the USA and its "allies" has been continuously shrinking. In this straightened market, those "allies," exhausted by the war, have gradually recovered their strength, especially West Germany and Japan, and become competitors that the USA has had to reckon with.

On the other hand, in order to preserve and enhance its role as leader of the "free world," and above all to launch and prolong wars of aggression costly in lives and resources such as the current war on the Indochinese peninsula, the USA has had to spend colossal sums abroad which have more and more strained its payment capacity. Although its commercial balance has thus far been always favourable, its balance of payments has for long been beset with deficit. Unlike Great Britain formerly, wrote *The Observer* (May 9, 1971), the problem facing the United States is not the excess of import over export.

The problem is how many times this excess has decreased owing to the massive outflow of American fund and currency to cover spending on the Viet Nam war and to secure big branches of European industry. From 1950 to the end of June, 1971 the balance of payments registered a deficit of 62 billion dollars — of which 22 billion in 1970 and in the first 6 months of 1971 — or one-third of the deficit in over 21 years. To the usual factors of deficit of war spending, foreign "aid," and investments abroad, new ones have emerged that make it still graver.

First, the American commercial balance had continuously shown an adverse tendency. Before 1965, foreign trade produced an annual inflow of 5 to 6 and sometimes 7 billion dollars. Since then the excess of export over import has been rapidly decreasing and in 1971 — the first time since 1893 — import surpassed export in the first 11 months, the deficit reached almost 2 billion dollars. This was due to galloping inflation (which made it hard for American goods to compete with those of other countries) and also to the fact that a number of items were inferior in quality to their foreign counterparts.

Second, short-term investments keep flowing massively from the USA, partly because American companies and banks have had to pay their Western European creditors, partly because funds deposited in the USA have been withdrawn to be invested at a higher rate of profit in Western Europe.

Those new factors have pointed to the US economic and financial weakening, particularly during the crisis beginning from autumn 1969. As a result, in the first 9 months of 1971, the US balance of payments showed a deficit of 24 billion dollars, that is 2,5 times higher than that of the whole previous year. The situation was serious not just owing to the size of the deficit but to the rate with which it had been growing, an intolerable rate indeed.

Remarkably enough, the whole US deficit in the balance of payments continued to be compensated by paper dollars. Foreign creditors, heavily dependent on the USA, were compelled to accept American devalued banknotes not backed by gold. In three years, from 1968 to 1971 the amount of paper dollars abroad rose by 25 billion, i.e. as much as in the preceding 15 years, from 1953 to 1968. While the volume of paper dollars grew ceaselessly and so rapidly, US gold reserves steadily declined. The following figures quoted from official American sources give a more concrete idea of what Western press calls the "dollar inundation" in recent months.

Year	*Gold reserve*	*Paper dollars abroad*
1949	24,6 billion dollars	6,4 billion dollars
1953	22,0 —	10,0 —
1956	22,0 —	13,5 —
1959	19,5 —	16,2 —
1962	16,0 —	19,8 —
1965	14,0 —	27,0 —
1968	10,0 —	35,0 —
1970	11,8 —	44,5 —
1971 (August)	9,7 — (estimates)	60,0 —

Between the amount of paper dollars abroad and gold reserve there has been a growing inverse ratio. In 1949, the rate between these paper dollars and gold reserve was 4 to 1 but is 1971, 1 to 6. As *Perspectives* (May 8, 1971) of a French economic research and information association put it, "the purchasing power of the dollar has downgraded because the Americans spend more money than they earn, they live beyond their means then pay the difference with dollars put in circulation without anything to back them, with bills that nothing guarantees in future. The natural result of such a process, for a country, is the devaluation of its currency." In this setting the official devaluation of the dollar was but a matter of time.

(To be continued)

VAN DUC

◀ US women: *An end to the Nixon war! Social welfare!*

in brief

o Kim Il Sung, Premier of the Korean Democratic People's Republic, has recently declared to the Japanese paper *Yomiuri Shimbun*: "With their heroic resistance against the US imperialist aggressors, the Vietnamese people have dealt them a stunning blow and been making a great contribution to the movement of progressive people in the world for peace, national independence and socialism."

o In an interview on January 17, 1972 with the Ambassador of the PRG of the RSVN in the GDR, H. Hopman, Minister of National Defence of the GDR, acclaimed the successes of the Vietnamese people in their effort against US aggression as the GDR "own." "We will do our best to strengthen solidarity with Viet Nam and increase our support and assistance to the Vietnamese final victory," he added.

In 1971, the GDR people collected 40 million marks for the Vietnamese people.

o The Polish-Indian joint communiqué issued at the close of the visit of the Polish government delegation pointed out:

"The seven-point proposal of the PRG of the RSVN is a sound basis for a peaceful settlement of the Viet Nam problem."

o On the "Support Viet Nam" day observed in Czechoslovakia, the trade-union members of a factory collected 250,000 crowns for the Viet Nam fund.

o Over 1,000 Italians in Milan took part in a meeting on January 15 in favour of the Vietnamese resistance to US aggression. Opening the rally Mr Trontin Bruno, Secretary General of the Italian Metallurgic TU, extolled the heroic fight of the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia and demanded that Nixon immediately pull all GIs out of Viet Nam and Indochina and dump Nguyen Van Thieu.

UNITED STATES

On January 15, 1972, about 600 Americans of Jewish extraction and Catholics held a meeting in Kansas during which they passed a resolution against the US war in Viet Nam and Indochina. On January 18, about 250 American women of the "Women Strike for Peace" organization demonstrated in front of the Capitol against Nixon pursuing the war in Viet Nam.

Meanwhile at the session of the US Congress held at the beginning of 1972, many congressmen flayed the sabotage activities of the American delegation at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam. Representative Bella Abzug protested against the Nixon administration's unwillingness to withdraw all US troops from South Viet Nam and pointed out that Nixon's Viet Nam policy was at great variance with the wishes of the American people.

in brief

SOUTH VIET NAM — CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION